

ROBERTSON'S RANT

The Newsletter of the Clan Donnachaidh Society —Mid-Atlantic Branch



FAIR HILL HIGHLAND GAMES REPORT

by Norman Dunkinson

I arrived around 7:00am for the 64th Fair Hill Scottish Games and Colonial Highland Gathering in northeastern Maryland on Saturday, May 16th. After locating our spot between Clans McAlister and Donald, our tent was set up in short order. President **Sam Kistler** arrived soon after with the new vinyl banner with sept names for the back of the tent.

We were pleased to greet a number of members and prospective members throughout the day. Our first visitors were member **Samuel Robertson** and family – Sam was competing in the drumming competition. The **Robertson-Simpson** family, who joined our Branch a number of years ago at Fair Hill, also paid a visit. Member **Eric Alexander**, the convener for our neighbor Clan McAlister, and I, took turns watching one another's tents when we needed to step away for a bit.

Prospective member Chip Griffith and his girlfriend Erica joined me for the Parade of Clans. As Fair Hill is a large pipe and drum competition, most clans were escorted by their very own band, and we were led off by the St. Anthony's High School Celtic Friars pipe band from South Huntingdon, New York. As always, when our clan was announced, we answered with a hearty "*Fierce When Roused!*" More members and prospective members visited throughout the afternoon.

At 2:30pm, the St. Andrew's Society of Baltimore presented the haggis. Lines quickly formed to sample the haggis with a biscuit and sauce (i.e. Glenmorangie). Another highlight of this event is Albannach and their "bareknuckle pipes and drums." Other entertainers included Charlie Zahm, the Bogside Rogues, and Coreyanne Piper Armstrong. Other features of this event included Scotch tastings, spinning and weaving demonstrations, sheepdogs, dulcimer music, highland dancing, the Braveheart 5K, and, of course, the athletic competition. There were two 12:00 caber tosses, two within 5 minutes of 12:00, and Nathan Burchett, from the Masters Class, crushed the competition with 51.5 total games points.

We had beautiful weather throughout the entire day, with a cooling breeze blowing through the tent and across clan row and warm, but not overly hot, sunshine and blue skies outside of the tent. We hope you'll join us at Fair Hill in 2027!

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Branch Officers

President:

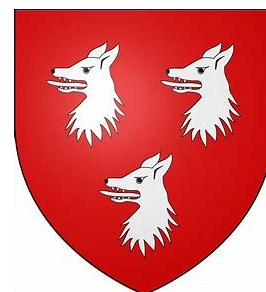
Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Tom Due

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson



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SCOTS HUMOR

An Englishman walks into a post office one day and sees a middle-aged Scotsman standing at the counter methodically placing "Love" stamps on bright pink envelopes with hearts all over them. He then takes out a perfume bottle and starts spraying scent all over them.

His curiosity getting the better of him, he goes up to the Scotsman and asks him what he is doing.

Angus Duncan says, "I'm sending out 1,000 Valentine cards signed, 'Guess Who?' to everyone in this town.

"But why?" asks the Englishman.

"I'm a divorce lawyer," Duncan replied.



Sam and Norman at the Fair Hill Highland Games at Fair Hill, Maryland. May 16, 2026.

CEUD MILE FAILTE—100,000 WELCOMES!

We'd like to thank the following new and returning members who joined or renewed since our last newsletter:

Eric N. Alexander

Amelia M. Ditch

Ronald A. Duncan

Denise Guess-Parsons

Patrick E. MacRae

Samuel Robertson

Eugene J. Wikle III



Clan Donnachaidh at the Wild & Wonderful Celtic Festival and Highland Games at Beverly, West Virginia. June 20, 2026.

CARROLL COUNTY CELTIC FESTIVAL REPORT

by Ron Bentz

I arrived at the site of the Carroll County Celtic Festival early on the morning of Saturday, June 13th with my mother **Betty Bentz**. President **Sam Kistler** arrived as I was getting the tent set up. I was grateful for Sam's help with the banners for the front and the back of the tent that were new to me. This has always been a favorite event of mine, and the third site I've set up at going back over twenty years. Of note, this is a two day event and I handed off hosting duties to Sam for Sunday, June 14th.

It's a unique setup for the clans. We are inside Shipley arena with the vendors and one of the entertainment stages. I was skeptical at first but I ended up liking it as being out of the heat was nice and, if it was a rainy day, it would've been good to be inside. We had a very enjoyable day at the tent greeting current members, such as **Stephen Robertson**, as well as recruiting several new members, including **Amelia Ditch** and **Ronald Duncan**. Before long it was time for opening ceremonies. As usual, Sam did a great job on the microphone announcing the parade of clans, and I did my best "*Fierce When Roused*" with a start from Sam!

There were 22 clans registered to be on hand, but there were a few who didn't make it. The honored clan was Little. Highland athletics of course is a staple attraction. The Adrian Paul Sword Experience (who you may know from The Highlander TV series) required a separate ticket for admission. There was whisky tasting for those so inclined. There were also Highland cows on site – always a big attraction! Headlining the main entertainment stage was Albannach. They've had a major change in their lineup as Jamesie has retired. I managed to catch most of a couple of sets by them and they were, of course, very good! These were just a few of the entertainment options on hand.

I encourage all clanfolk to make it to this event if possible. It was very well attended and plenty to see and do.

WILD & WONDERFUL CELTIC FESTIVAL AND HIGHLAND GAMES REPORT

by Jim Fargo

On Saturday, June 20th, **Robert Knight** and I arrived at 8:00am at the Wild & Wonderful Celtic Festival and Highland Games in Beverly, West Virginia, for their 4th annual festival. We soon located our two designated spots and were setting up when President **Sam Kistler** arrived.

It was a hot, sunny day with a nice breeze. We had a lot of family visitors stop to visit, mainly to get the children passports stamped with our clan crest. Adults were interested to learn which clan(s) they might be associated with. Our assortment of research books and clan map of Scotland is always helpful in connecting individual visitor surnames to various clans.

My particular thanks to **Bob Strickland** and his wife for joining us for the day. We were also joined by an Irish-descent U.S. Navy veteran named **Rich** and his family, with him wearing the U.S. Navy Edzell tartan. This is the second year the three of us marched together in the noon parade of clans. Robert separately marched under the clan MacNaughton banner. The parade was supported by two pipe bands originating from western Maryland and West Virginia.

On the athletic field, we were represented by member **Zack McCrobie**, who unfortunately due to a shoulder injury was not competing in the highland athletic events this year; and **Alex Duncan**, who was one of the judges running the athletic events. We packed up and left the field around 5:00pm under the threat of approaching thunderstorms.

I am well pleased with the games staff who made every effort to assist the clan conveners throughout the day. Next year's games will be held on Saturday, June 19, 2027. We will have a clan setup there and we hope you can come by and join us for a very enjoyable day.

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JOHN ROBERTSON REID (1851-1926)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

John Robertson Reid was born in Edinburgh on August 6, 1851, to Scottish parents. The family moved to London prior to 1860 where his sisters were born, then the family moved back to Edinburgh. In 1881 the family returned to London.

Reid spent his early years working in Surrey, England, and then from the early 1880s in Cornwall in the wild southwest of England. His sisters, Elizabeth (Lizzie) Reid and Flora MacDonald Reid were also exhibiting artists and a number of Flora's paintings are in the National Galleries of Scotland. Reid was the great-uncle of Sir Norman Robert Reid, Director of the Tate Gallery (from 1964-1979), which was founded in 1897 as the National Gallery of British Art in London.



Toil and Pleasure. From <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/reid-toil-and-pleasure-n01600>.

He was trained at the Royal Scottish Academy Schools under George Chalmers and William MacTaggart and his mature style was influenced by the move in painting toward rural naturalism led by Sir George Clausen and the French Realists under Jules Bastien-Lepage. He found initial success with natural outdoor scenes of the Surrey countryside and he was notable at the time for painting his scenes outdoors on location and hiring local people to pose in the scene. He was a painter of genre, landscapes and coastal scenes. He moved to Cornwall in the West Country, painting frequently from Devon and later to London where his painting "Toil and Pleasure" was shown at the Royal Academy in 1879 and later bought for the nation by the Chantrey Bequest.

He was president of the Society of British Artists in 1886 and the Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers in 1898. Based on these posts, he gained an entrée into London society and from the early 1900s he made his home in London. The young Sir Winston Churchill used to paint outdoors in the company of Reid.

Reid's ideas influenced Sir George Clausen and contributed to the development of the Glasgow School. He was a prominent Scottish painter well known for his dynamic, robust handling of watercolor as a medium and for the social realist content of his pictures.

John Robertson Reid died on February 10, 1926 and was buried in London.

References:

Multiple Wikipedia searches.



ANNE STRACHAN ROBERTSON (1910–1997)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Anne was born on May 3, 1910, in Glasgow, Scotland, to John Anderson and Margaret (nee Purden) Robertson. Both parents were school teachers and they had four daughters. Anne's undergraduate education was at Hillhead High School and the Glasgow High School for Girls. In 1928 she attended the University of Glasgow and studied the work and teachings of S.N. Miller related to Roman history in Scotland.

In 1930 she won the Cowan Medal at the university and after graduation with a Master of Arts with Honours in Classics in 1932, she began studies for a second MA in Archaeology at the University of London. While in London, she obtained scholarships to participate in excavations of Roman forts in Wales and the Iron Age fortified hill-top at Maiden Castle in Dorset. During this time, she began work at the Coin Room of the British Museum. After graduation in 1934 she returned to Glasgow where in 1936 she was appointed the Dalrymple Lecturer in Archaeology.

In 1938, Anne joined the staff of the University of Glasgow and worked in the curation of the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery. She became Under Keeper of the Museum in 1952 and in 1964 was appointed keeper of cultural collections and promoted to reader in archaeology. She received a Doctorate in Literature in 1965 from the University of Glasgow. In 1974 she received the honorary title of Professor and became the Keeper of Roman Archeology at the museum.

She became president of the Glasgow Archaeological Society from 1954 to 1957 after having served as vice-president of the Society from 1945 to 1954. She was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (FSA Scot) in 1941 and from 1946 was the first woman to be elected to that council. In the 1957 issue of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (pp. 241-6) her first article "A Hoard of Roman Silver Coins from Brigland, Rumbling Bridge, Kinross-shire" was published, followed by many additional archaeological articles through 1984. She also prepared a four-volume set of books covering Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet. She was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1958. In 1959, she excavated a section of the Antonine Wall around the Roman fort at Duntocher along the Clyde side of narrow waist of Scotland, the Forth-Clyde isthmus.



Anne Strachan Robertson. From https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Anne-Robertson-first-female-speaker-at-the-Limes-Congress-C-The-Herald-Glasgow_fig5_363265373.

In 1964, she was awarded the Cowan Medal of the Royal Numismatic Society followed by the Huntington Medal from the American Numismatic Society in 1970.

Never married, on her retirement she moved to the town of Bearsden, a few yards south of the Antonine Wall. In Bearden, she worked for many years to complete her final work, "Romano-British Coin Hoards", but sadly died before its publication. Professor Anne Robertson died on October 4, 1997 and is buried in Bearsden.

References:

Historic Scotland, "Invaders of Scotland", Edinburgh, 2000, p. 6.
Multiple Wikipedia searches.

ROBERTSON'S RANT

EVAN DUNCAN'S SCOTTISH SHORTBREAD RECIPE

Sift/sieve the flour into a bowl and add the pinch of salt. Put aside for the moment.

Using butter, grease the baking tray well and put it aside for the moment. Yield for fingers (much preferred) is around a 7 to 8 inch square.

Pre-heat the oven 325F.

Put the butter (if using unsalted butter then ADD a pinch of salt to it) into a medium-size mixing bowl and mash it with a fork until it is soft and creamy without lumps. But don't let your hand heat warm it so much it starts to get runny. If you do, then put the bowl complete with butter & fork into the fridge for 5 - 10 minutes to cool it, then take it out and mash quickly again until smooth and creamy with no lumps.

Add the sugar and mix it in well, and quickly.

Add the salted flour a VERY little at a time - mixing it in with the fork to start with, but do this quickly.

Knead well (on a very lightly floured surface). I was advised: knead for several minutes, and that the longer you knead, the better the shortbread will be. I usually aim for kneading for anything up to 10 minutes as I was told to, but get fed up after 7 minutes and reckon it can't make THAT much difference! What is very important is: Don't allow the mixture to become too warm from your body heat whilst kneading. If it does, as before, put it into the fridge for a couple of minutes to chill it slightly before resuming. If you do find the need to chill it, as I often do on a hot day, then do knead it for at least a minute or so before rolling it.

Something I should add despite the copious over-instruction here: I've never owned a rolling pin until a couple of days ago. I don't know if using one will affect the texture, but I always used to pat it down as best I could with my palms.

Roll the mixture out to shape and size of the tray. Roll out to about 1/2 inch thick or perhaps even slightly thicker (this sounds awfully thick I know!, but it is important as if you go thinner it will affect the texture, and amazingly, the taste).

Prick all over with a fork and put it into baking tray. Do try to use one that can fit exactly, or one that at least three sides of the mixture fit snugly against, as any outer edges that don't butt right up against the sides of a tray tend to get a bit over-baked. Score lightly (to about halfway downwards to bottom of the tray) into eight equal segments.

Bake until golden brown for about 45 minutes at 325F. Do keep an eye on it! Hard to describe the colour to bake until. From experience I know what colour I'm looking for - you don't really want it to be undercooked, but when it's starting get a bit dark around the edges it's probably beginning to get a bit overdone already. Basically cook until it's just starting to darken round the edges then get it out quick and cool it - I usually place the hot tray on a very cold surface until cool.

Whilst still quite warm in the tray, mark across and cut into finger-shaped pieces - but leave them there in the tray, cut and together until fully cold.



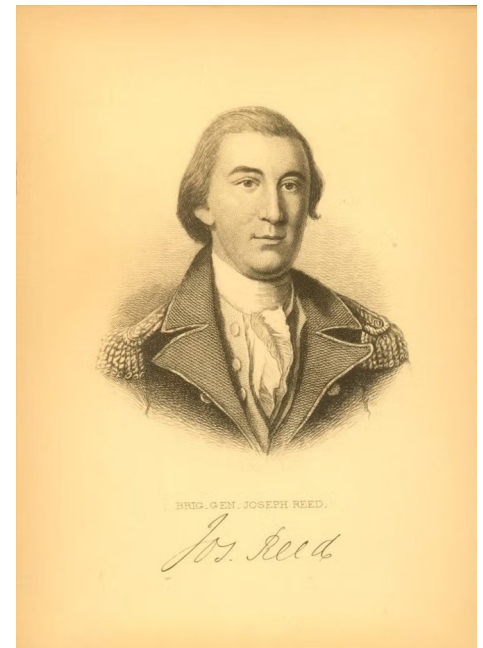
TREASON ON THE HUDSON

by Jim Fargo

The passage of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 had forced American colonists to choose to either support the newly created United States or declare their continued loyalty to the British King George III. Before the war, Arnold had been an apothecary and seagoing merchant captain. After the British defeat at the battle of Saratoga on October 7, 1777, where Brigadier General Benedict Arnold was badly wounded a second time and almost lost his left leg, he was hailed as an American hero. Arnold had previously been wounded in the same leg in the American attempt to take Quebec in 1775. Arnold was filled with injustice when he learned he wasn't to be promoted to major general and his personal living expenses were not likely to be paid by the Continental Congress. He submitted his resignation from the Connecticut provincial militia which was rejected by the Congress in July 1777.

When France recognized the United States, the situation changed from what had been a colonial war to what became a world war. Both European countries were dependent on their West Indies and Caribbean islands which were of immense economic importance. In the winter of 1778 at Washington's headquarters in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, General Washington submitted a plan to reorganize the Continental Army to Congress, which addressed the shortcomings of having regional state militia armies and the need to develop a quartermaster system by which the Continental Congress could pay and feed the American troops.

With Washington's victories at Trenton, New Jersey in December 1777 and January 1778, the American forces continued toward Princeton and forced the British to retreat toward New York City and winter quarters. Prussian born Baron Friedrich Von Steuben arrived from Germany and during winter quarters at Valley Forge, reformed and drilled the Continental Army into a disciplined and professional fighting force. Steuben addressed and eliminated widespread graft and corruption in supplying the army and in reward for his volunteer services Congress commissioned the Baron to the position of Inspector General with the rank of Major General. At this point, Washington's former adjutant general and Philadelphia lawyer Joseph Reed in the fall of 1778 prosecuted 23 suspected Loyalists for treason. Two were found guilty and hanged. In January 1779, Washington came to Philadelphia to meet with the Continental Congress and lobby for additional military funding and establishment of a national army rather than individual state militias. Both Reed and Washington were concerned about Arnold's financial scheming to acquire wealth, leave the military and gain an estate in New York. Reed, serving on the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, continued harassment of Arnold by the threat of a potential court-martial over Arnold's business dealings.



Joseph Reed. From <https://archives.upenn.edu/exhibits/penn-people/biography/joseph-reed/>.

At Valley Forge in May 1778, near British-occupied Philadelphia, Benedict Arnold had joined the Continental Army as a Brigadier General. During the time span of August to October 1780, Major General Benedict Arnold was the superintendent of the military academy at West Point, New York. His headquarters were in Robinson House, the confiscated home of loyalist Beverley Robinson on the east bank of the Hudson River. Robinson was serving as the colonel of a regiment of loyalists in New York. Charged with securing the Hudson River and with the artillery and other military supplies stored at West Point, Arnold kept up a public aura of loyalty while secretly corresponding with Major John Andre, the British spy chief in New York.

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TREASON ON THE HUDSON (CONTINUED)



Beverly Robinson. From <https://www.toriesfightingfortheking.com/ToryArmy.htm>.

After the American armies were defeated at Camden and Charleston, South Carolina, Arnold was eager to restore his fortunes and offered to sell West Point, its military stores and the garrison of three thousand soldiers to the British, with the proviso that he be rewarded with 10 thousand pounds and commissioned with the rank of brigadier general in the British army. Meeting with Major Andre and loyalist Beverly Robinson from his commandeered headquarters in Robinson House, Arnold finalized their plans to turn over West Point. Unfortunately for Arnold, the plans soon fell apart with the capture of Andre by American sentries while attempting to return to British lines. On September 25th, learning of Andre's capture, Arnold fled to the British lines in New York.

Four years earlier, the British had hanged Captain Nathan Hale as a spy. This had set a grim precedent for dealing with spies. Washington ordered the execution by hanging of Major Andre as a spy which was carried out on October 2, 1780. Joseph Reed, president of Pennsylvania's Supreme Executive Council in Philadelphia, ordered the seizure of Arnold's papers to find proof of his treachery.

General Nathanael Greene had overseen the trial of Andre and was Arnold's replacement as commander of West Point. He summed up the outrage and suspicion that Arnold's treason had stirred up by saying "How black, how despised, loved by none and hated by all. Once his country's idol, now her horror".

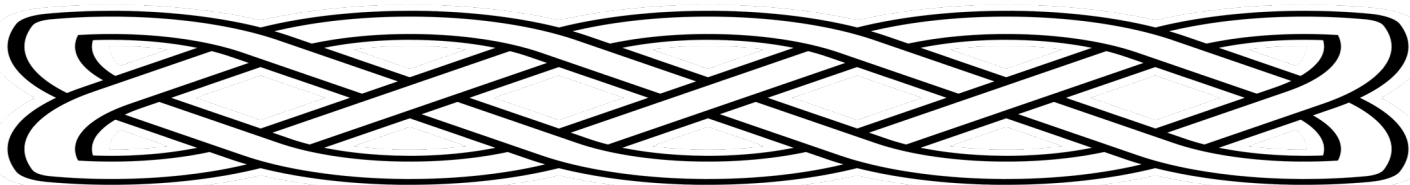
Rather than have Arnold languish in New York, Lieutenant General Sir Henry Clinton sent him and his loyalist regiment known as the 'American Legion' on the January 1781 raid on Richmond, Virginia, then in September 1781 in raids on New London and Groton, Connecticut in an attempt to divert American forces from the successful siege and surrender of General Cornwallis's British Army at Yorktown, Virginia in October 1781.

After the war, Arnold failed in businesses in Canada and London. He died on June 14, 1801 (U.S. Flag Day) and was buried in his Continental Army uniform at St Mary's Church, Middlesex, London.

Postscript: During the Revolutionary War, America was split between Loyalists to the Crown and those that wanted a new independent government. Our clanfolk (Reed and Robinson and others) also had split loyalties, but I don't believe any turned traitor to whichever side they believed in.

References:

Philbrick, Nathaniel, "Valiant Ambition: George Washington, Benedict Arnold, and the Fate of the American Revolution", Penguin Books, 2017.
Multiple Wikipedia searches.



MACIE ROBERTS (1898–1991)

by Jim Fargo

Macie Roberts began her working career as an auditor for the Internal Revenue Service.

Macie “Bobby” Roberts left the IRS for NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California in 1942. When JPL expanded from rocket technology to missile technology, she was promoted to supervisor of an expanded division of women mathematicians nicknamed “computers” in 1962. These women were mostly unknown, but did the majority of all space trajectory calculations by using slide rules and adding machines required for lunar space missions before the development of electronic computers. She hired and trained new women employees for over thirty years. They were popularly known as the ‘Rocket Girls.’

Her famous quote, which is sadly still the case today: “You have to look like a girl, act like a lady, think like a man, and work like a dog.”

The Mars Astrobiological Cave and Internal habitability Explorer (MACIE) is named in her honor. It is a legged rover built to access the Martian subsurface via lava tube caves that might host ice water.

References:

Holt, Nathalia, “The Rise of the Rocket Girls”, Little, Brown and Company, 2016.
Multiple Wikipedia searches.

WILLIAM JOSEPH ROBERTSON (1817–1898)

by Jim Fargo

William Joseph Robertson was born on December 20, 1817 in Culpeper County, Virginia. He attended the University of Virginia from 1834 till 1836 and returned in 1841 to graduate. He married his first wife, Hannah Gordon in 1842. He was admitted to the Virginia Bar in 1843 and settled in Charlottesville to practice law. He was elected the Commonwealth Attorney for Albemarle County, Virginia in 1852.

Prior to the Civil War, Robertson prosecuted the trial of John Singleton Mosby, a 19-year-old student at the University of Virginia who had shot another student. Mosby claimed self-defense, but was convicted anyway and jailed. While serving time, prosecuting attorney Robertson befriended him and offered Mosby the use of his law library to study law while in jail. Mosby was pardoned in December 1853, was admitted to the Virginia bar and established his own practice in Howardsville. In January 1863, Mosby took command of the 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry and became known as the “Gray Ghost” for his daring raids in Virginia during the Civil War.

Robertson was elected a judge on the Virginia Court of Appeals in 1859 on which he served until 1865, when the new post-war Virginia governor declined to reappoint him. After the death of his first wife, he married a second time in 1863 to Alice Watts. He returned to private practice after the war, and one of his most famous cases was his representing the Lee family in the resolution and loss of their prewar family home, the Custis-Lee Mansion and estate, which had been confiscated by the U.S. Government in 1864 and became Arlington National Cemetery. Robertson later became a railroad lawyer and served as general counsel for the Norfolk & Western railroad and as a board member of the Chesapeake & Ohio railroad. Judge Robertson was a charter member of the Virginia Bar Association and became its first president, serving from July 1888 to July 1889.

Judge Robertson died in Charlottesville on May 27, 1898 and is buried there. In 1999, Robertson’s Charlottesville home, the Judge William J. Robertson House, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

References:

Multiple Wikipedia searches.



Scottish Christmas Walk, Alexandria, Virginia.
December 2025.

**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY
MID-ATLANTIC BRANCH**

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The Clan Donnachaidh Society is a world-wide organization dedicated to the preservation of our Highland heritage. Membership is open to those persons bearing recognized sept surnames and their descendants and spouses.

Membership in the parent Clan Donnachaidh Society in Scotland includes a subscription to the Clan Donnachaidh Annual.

Membership in the Mid-Atlantic Branch of the Clan Donnachaidh Society includes a subscription to the Branch newsletter, Robertson's Rant, published quarterly and containing listings of Highland Games and Celtic Festivals throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, Game and Festival reports, historical and biographical articles, and news items of interest to Donnachaidhs everywhere. Membership also includes an open invitation to join your fellow society members at the Clan Donnachaidh Tent and Diner at numerous Games and Festivals, and at other activities including the annual Scottish Christmas Walk and Clan Donnachaidh luncheon in the Old Town section of Alexandria, Virginia, in early December.

Parent Society membership dues are \$25.00 per year (individual) and \$35.00 per year (family = two persons/same address). Mid-Atlantic Branch membership dues are \$20.00 per year (individual).

UPCOMING CELTIC EVENTS & GAMES—2026

<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Virginia Scottish Games & Festival	The Plains, VA	Sep 5 th - 6 th
Edinboro Highland Games	Edinboro, PA	Sep 11 th - 12 th
Covenanter Scottish Festival	Quarryville, PA	Sep 12 th
Woodridge Farm & Brewery Celtic Festival	Livingston, VA	Sep 19 th - 20 th
Celtic Classic	Bethlehem, PA	Sep 25 th - 27 th
Harpers Ferry Highland Games	Harpers Ferry, VA	Oct 3 rd - 4 th
Radford Highlanders Festival	Radford, VA	Oct 10 th
Scottish Christmas Walk	Alexandria, VA	Dec 5 th